

SOURCES OF LOVE AND HATE

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scratch, bite, devour her. Let us again remember that he only can understand other people in terms of himself—with a difference, certainly, but with the difference disappearing under the drive of strong emotion. So that this bad' mother is understood in terms of his own present feeling of 'badness'. *He* wants to hurt, bite, scratch, devour *her* when *she* will not do what he wants, i.e., when *she* is 'bad'. Therefore *she* must be wanting to scratch, bite, devour *him* when *he* is 'bad'. We know how the calmest physical restraint of a fighting, struggling child in a fury of rage does obviously feel to him the most intense danger at the time ; as if you could only prove yourself not the monster of his temporary feelings if you allowed yourself to be hurt without a single movement of self-defence. *You* feel to *him* what *he* is wanting to be at the time—an invincible agent of destruction. And if, as must often happen, signs of anger or impatience escape, the child is confirmed in his feeling of an antagonist's ruthless wishes. *That* he understands; any sign of feeling he understands, *as feeling*. What he does not understand are the ego forces in control of the feeling, particularly when he himself is compact of feeling, and his small ego overwhelmed thereby. Aggressive feeling of any sort he is lightning-quick to recognise, although, as I have said, he is unable to understand the ego forces in control of it. Hence the resultant true-untrue picture. A little girl of three was avidly collecting as many - Christmas-cracker toys as possible. A grown-up gave her what she could. Suddenly the child stopped, looked wonderingly at her friend, and in a voice of bewilderment and incredulity asked, ' Don't *you* want lots ? ' That was at three years

old, and an
advanced three-years-old. There was
comprehension only
of an aggressive wanting; none of a state of
mind different
from her own, even though there was an
intelligent awareness
of the difference.

" To complicate the picture of the aggressive
wishes we
have a situation in human infancy
unparalleled in the rest
of the animal world. The nursing mother is
not absorbed
in the care of her offspring ; her interests are
really divided,
and the quite small baby knows that others,
bigger perhaps,
and certainly biggest, share her love, her
attentions, her
body. Here is a setting in which the little child,
from, say,
the latter part of the first year to the fourth
or fifth, very